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ABSTRACT

The Directed Reading Using Music Strategy (DRUMS) is a type of reading strategy that can lead to the teaching of reflective thinking skills, increased reading comprehension and vocabulary, along with increased motivation for learning. Research indicates that contemporary song lyrics aid reading comprehension and can be used as motivational text. A wide selection of song lyrics should be used during the 40-minute lessons. Steps in the strategy are (1) motivation; (2) introduction of vocabulary; (3) setting a purpose for reading; (4) reading; (5) reinforce comprehension; (6) reread; (7) validate interpretations, reflect, and reinforce comprehension; and (8) extend and enrich the lesson. Teachers' and students' positive reactions to the DRUMS procedures suggest that the strategy may be useful in adding variety to the traditional reading class. Contains 26 references and short synopses of 8 novels and related songs. A 19-item list of novel and song titles is attached. (RS)

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Reading to a Different DRUM:

The Directed Reading Using Music Strategy

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running head: DRUMS

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Engaging Students in Reflections of Reading

Presenting written text which parallels oral stories may provide highly motivating reading materials for students of all ages. Song lyrics are one type of text that parallels oral stories, and they can be found on almost any topic, so that individual students' interests may be addressed. The Directed Reading Using Music Strategy (DRUMS) is a type of reading strategy that can lead to the teaching of reflective thinking skills, increased reading comprehension and vocabulary, along with increased motivation for learning.

Reflective thinking skills are addressed through meaningful discussion led by the teacher and should include literal, interpretive, and applied levels of comprehension (Vacca & Vacca, 1989). During the DRUMS procedure, these thinking skills, combined with popular music lyrics, address the concerns, hopes, and dreams of young people today (Ebisutani, Donlan, & Siebers, 1991; Larrick, 1971). When these factors mesh together, reflection and comprehension of the material should occur.

Song Lyrics used to aid Reading Comprehension

Research suggests that reading comprehension is dependent upon a student's "using all his linguistic competence, his thinking skills, plus his previously acquired knowledge of what the writer is discussing, ... to reconstruct the original text that was in the mind of the writer" (Devine, 1989, p.10). In other words, students have to relate the texts they are reading to all they know about reading and the world they live in. When using song lyrics as directed reading material, the major premises for comprehension are satisfied. Linguistic competence is first learned orally (Adams, 1990; Anderson, Hiebert, Scott & Wilkinson, 1985), therefore, by listening to the song as a preview activity, the students may gain familiarity with the text before they read it. The song lyrics are encoded in simple, brief texts so that decoding is usually not a problem (Kuhmerker, 1969; Renegar, 1986; Tucker, 1981). Hearing the song while reading the text often allows for word recognition (Hirst & O'Such, 1979; McDonald, 1975). Teachers have been using narrative lyrical text from contemporary popular music as reading materials for more than 25 years, to aid reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition (Baechtold & Algier, 1986; Kaiden and

Walker, 1985; Klink, 1976; Newsom, 1979;). Little research has been done to verify the usefulness of song lyrics as a sound educational material. One research study (Marchionda, 1993) has suggested that reading comprehension and vocabulary can indeed be enhanced by using song lyrics in a systematic directed reading activity.

Research also seems to indicate that vocabulary acquisition through direct reading instruction increases both word knowledge and reading comprehension. Vocabulary knowledge is directly connected to reading comprehension in that it provides one type of link to previously known information (Adams, 1990; Pearson & Johnson, 1978; McKeown, Beck, Omanson, & Pople, 1985; Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986).

Song Lyrics used as Motivational Text

Research suggests that high interest materials and students' attitudes toward reading are central factors affecting reading performance (Anderson, et. al., 1985; Purves & Beach, 1972; Walberg & Tsai, 1983). Motivational text is text that creates high interest in the material, contains an interesting topic to the reader, maintains a reader's attention, or creates other stimulus of interest exclusive to the individual reader. Song lyrics taken from contemporary music can provide motivational texts for junior high/high school students due to young adults' interests in popular culture and themes presented in song lyrics. Contemporary songs are one type of oral language that present narratives of popular culture, history, themes, concerns, and human experiences. These students typically hear and enjoy stories through popular music.

DRUMS: The Directed Reading Using Music Strategy

DRUMS was developed using the framework for the Directed Reading Activity (DRA) originated by Betts (1946), which consists of a before, during and after reading activity, modified to work with song lyrics similarly described by Ridout (1990). The DRA framework was chosen due to its familiarity among classroom teachers (Shannon, 1989; Singer, 1985) for reading lessons.

To address the diverse interests in a high school classroom, several types of music should be chosen to satisfy a range of interests that may be contained in any group. It is generally agreed

that songs should be chosen to match the interests of students (Carsetti, 1983; Klink, 1976; Mateja, 1982; Renegar, 1990) because different songs affect different listeners in different ways. Musical preferences are culturally conditioned and the audience needs to be prepared to accept the premise of the lyrics (Booth, 1976). Contemporary musicians seem to be doing what Appalachian songsters, New England seaman, and other popular bards had done in the past; they seem to be interpreting the world through music and communicating with "others who share their priorities, hopes, fantasies, ways of wit, and ways of coping with loss" (Newsom, 1979, p.729). Therefore, choosing a wide selection of song lyrics to employ the DRUMS strategy is recommended. Each lesson is designed to take approximately 40 minutes.

The Directed Reading Using Music Strategy (DRUMS)

Step One: Motivation

Motivation consists of listening to the song before being given the lyrics to read. After listening to the song, the lyrics are presented to the students, and they are given an opportunity to read and think about what they had just listened to.

Step Two: Introduction of Vocabulary

Target vocabulary is introduced. After giving students a copy of the song lyrics, teachers directly teach the vocabulary that has been previously identified as target words. Teaching of vocabulary consists of discussing meanings of the words by brainstorming, using context clues, using structural analysis, and/or meanings given by the teacher.

Step Three: Setting a Purpose for Reading

The purpose set by the teacher is to see how the target words are used in the song and what story the song has to tell.

Step Four: Reading

The students read the words of the song along with hearing the song. The target vocabulary words are also boldfaced and underlined to signal their importance to the students.

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Step Five: Reinforce Comprehension

Students get into groups of three or four for 10 minutes to discuss what they think the song means and how the new vocabulary words were used.

Step Six: Reread (A Comprehension Fix-up Strategy)

The song is played again for the entire class. Students read the lyrics while they listen to the song.

Step Seven: Validate Interpretations, Reflect, and Reinforce Comprehension

The entire class comes together as a large group to discuss how each small group interpreted the song to reinforce comprehension and the meanings of the vocabulary words.

Step Eight: Extend and Enrich the Lesson

Students write their reflections and interpretations about the song and experience of the session of DRUMS in a journal.

DRUMS was developed and used as part of a study that successfully increased reading comprehension and vocabulary in two groups of ninth grade students (Marchionda, 1993). DRUMS was based on the traditional Directed Reading Activity used in many classrooms today (Shannon, 1989). Therefore, teachers who may want to use this type of delivery should be able to adapt it to their classrooms quite easily. DRUMS may be useful as a reinforcement activity in the reading classroom to increase comprehension, develop vocabulary, and to increase the habit of reflective reading.

Students that were practicing the DRUMS often remarked that it was a "different way to read" and an "interesting assignment". One student was overheard saying that they "liked these words". When interviewing teachers directing the study, the researcher was told the following anecdotes:

- Following the third session of DRUMS, a student who was not very interested in reading, nor school, approached the teacher after class to ask if he could bring in some of his own songs to do DRUMS with in class. He offered to write out the lyrics and to copy enough for the class.

- On the way back to school from a class trip, the teacher told the students they would have about an hour of class left when they arrived at school. A few students immediately suggested that they do DRUMS for the remaining time.

These anecdotes and other enthusiasms for the DRUMS procedures relayed by the teachers to the researcher suggest that this strategy may be useful in adding variety to the traditional reading class. Song lyrics are a different type of text than regularly used in the classroom, therefore, may be used as a motivating text to use between applications of text mandated by the curriculum. DRUMS is a sound strategy that may increase students comprehension, vocabulary, reflective thinking skills, and may motivate a reluctant reader to become an active reader.

Specific Applications of DRUMS for the Classroom

Novel Connections

Here are some examples to apply the DRUMS procedure for a pre, during, or post reading activity to emphasize the themes, characterizations, plots, etc. of the novel suggested. (A short synopsis is included to show connections.)

NOVEL	SONG
The Light in the Forest, Conrad Richter, A story of a young boy returned to his birth parents after being raised by his Indian captors.	*Seminole Wind*, John Andersen A story of the plight of the Seminole Indians in Florida.
Across Five Aprils, Irene Hunt A story about a family during the Civil War.	*The Night They Drove Ol' Dixie Down*, Joan Baez A song about a family during the Civil War.
True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle, Avi A story of a young girl's journey on a ship.	*The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*, Gordon Lightfoot A ballad of a famous ship.
Nothing But the Truth, Avi A story of a boy who questions authority.	*Born in the USA*, Bruce Springsteen A song of a man who questions war.
Pigman, Paul Zindel A story of coming-of-age.	*Wildflowers*, Dolly Parton A song about coming-of-age.
Call of the Wild, Jack London A tale of a dog's journey into the wild.	*Born to be Wild*, Steppenwolf A song-tribute to being wild.
The Diary of Anne Frank, Anne Frank A journal of a WWII captive.	*Iron Hand*, Dire Straits A lesson about war.
Prince and the Pauper, Mark Twain Two boys, one rich, one poor, switch places to experience each other's life.	*MaterialGirl*, Madonna / *Coal Miner's Daughter*, Loretta Lynn Two songs, one about a rich girl, one about a poor girl - use them to compare lifestyles.

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